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A proposed project is described that aims at improving language instruction methods and augmenting the capabilities of schools for teaching foreign language effectively, even where a shortage of skilled language teachers exists.

It is proposed that these goals be achieved through the development of an audio-lingual-visual course, utilizing dramatic motion pictures and programed learning materials as principal instruments of instruction. These materials will be designed: to instill in students a positive attitude toward learning a foreign language; to develop student confidence in himself regarding his ability; to make possible individual and group self-instruction programs, enabling more pupils to study foreign language; to facilitate implementation of the audio-lingual approach and achievement of audio-lingual teaching objectives in courses conducted by teachers having limited foreign language competency; to take over part of the teaching function, enabling qualified teachers to make their skills available to a larger number of students; and to make possible new approaches to the use of television in foreign language instruction.

The principal elements in the system will be motion pictures, programed learning materials, and qualified teachers. Each will function in the manner in which it is best suited to contribute to the learning process.

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A New Design for Teaching Foreign Languages Using Dramatic Motion Pictures and Programmed Learning Materials

Gerald Newmark

9 November 1962

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

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Table of Contents Page

I. Introduction 1

II. Background 1

III. Goals of the Proposed Project 8

IV. General Description of Instructional System 9

V. Research and Development Procedures 13

VI. Detailed Discussion of Course of Study,
Materials and Classroom Techniques and Procedures 16

A. Objectives 16

B. Scope, Organization and Content 17

C. Principles 18

D. Materials 19

E. Classroom Techniques and Procedures 26

VII. Selected References 33

A New Design for Teaching Foreign Languages Using Dramatic Motion Pictures and Programmed Learning Materials

Gerald Newmark

System Development Corporation
Santa Monica, California

I. Introduction

The purposes of this paper are to stimulate thinking and discussion on new approaches to foreign language instruction and to suggest a blueprint for the development and implementation of these new approaches.

The paper describes a proposed project aimed at improving language instruction methods and augmenting the capabilities of schools for teaching foreign languages effectively, even where a shortage of skilled language teachers exists.

II. Background

The national interest in foreign languages and recognition of the need to develop linguistic skills in large numbers of our population is at an all-time high. Coupled with this, the importance of oral communication is being increasingly recognized and emphasized. Experts are recommending an audio-lingual (listening and speaking) approach in language teaching. The employment of longer sequences of instruction (e.g., six and ten year programs) also is generally recognized to be essential to achieving proficiency in the auditory comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing of a foreign language. In attempting to satisfy the national interest and needs in the language area, foreign language instruction faces a number of difficult problems.

A. The Teacher Shortage Problem

Because of a serious shortage of qualified foreign language instructors, many students are denied the opportunity of foreign language study. A large number of high schools in the United States fail to offer a single modern foreign language.

In many schools offering a foreign language, there are only enough qualified teachers to provide one or perhaps two years of language instruction--often with undesirably large class sizes. All too frequently, foreign languages are taught by persons inadequately trained in language teaching methods and in the language itself.

The interest in, and growth of, foreign language programs in elementary schools (FLES) has, of course, resulted in still greater demand for qualified language teachers. Many elementary and junior high school districts express their desire to start foreign language programs but are unable to do so because of the lack of qualified language teachers. Many FLES programs have been undertaken with teachers possessing limited, or often complete lack of, competency in the foreign language taught.

The teacher shortage in the language area is likely to be acute for many years and will be accentuated as general enrollments increase and the demand for longer sequences of instruction continues. If improved language instruction is to be provided to more students, for longer periods of time, exploration of new approaches, both in the development and utilization of media, materials and techniques must proceed at a rapid and augmented rate.

B. The Situation in California--A Particular Example of a Nationwide Problem

The problem of foreign language instruction has become particularly acute in California. By legislative action, foreign language instruction has been made mandatory in grades 6, 7, and 8, commencing in 1965.

If regular classroom teachers are to conduct language classes created by this California legislation, it is estimated that 13,000 teachers with foreign language qualifications would be needed. If special teachers handling seven classes a day were employed, approximately 2,000 additional qualified teachers would be required. When one considers that even current needs for qualified teachers are not being met, the magnitude of the problem becomes apparent.

This interest in introducing foreign language at lower grade levels and developing longer sequences of foreign language study is not unique to California. Rather, it is nationwide and almost every state is seeking solutions to the difficult problems posed by the teacher shortage and the new emphasis on developing audio-lingual skills. The Modern Language Association of America recommends that foreign language instruction begin in the primary grades. Many of the nation's schools are attempting to move their language programs down into the junior high and elementary schools. On a national level, the teacher problem becomes staggering.

C. Student Motivation as a Major Problem in Foreign Language Teaching

Language courses must develop in students a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language and confidence in their ability to do so. This is especially important in beginning classes.

It is the reaction to this initial experience that determines, to a large extent, how long students continue to study a foreign language and also how well they apply themselves to the task.

At present, many students discontinue their language study as soon as they have completed the requirements of their particular school system (generally after one or two years of study, frequently split between two different languages). Where there is no school requirement, many students take no foreign language at all.

In order to promote motivation, confidence, and learning, the language teacher has many obstacles to overcome: the artificiality of the classroom setting, the learner's inhibitions and fear of making mistakes and sounding foolish, the limited amount of time available, large classes, and the wide range of individual differences in aptitude among students.

Furthermore, initial experiences with second-language learning frequently are anxiety-provoking. First attempts at speaking are usually inaccurate. Thus begins a continuous process of trial, error, and correction, which tends to reduce confidence and increase anxiety from the outset--increasingly so for the slower students as the class progresses. In addition, a considerable amount of repetition and drill are required to achieve even a modest degree of proficiency with most students; this can be extremely exhausting for both pupils and teachers, taxing to the limit the latter's imagination, resources, and ability to make the learning interesting and effective.

Materials and techniques are needed that appeal to, and are effective with, a larger segment of the student population. Programs must have sufficient variety and flexibility to enable slow learners to make satisfactory progress and to keep fast learners interested and motivated, while each pupil progress at a rate commensurate with his ability.

D. The Problem of Sequence of Instruction and Neglect of Listening Comprehension

Advocates of the audio-lingual approach stress the hearing, speaking, reading, writing sequence in language learning. The importance of ear training in the development of speaking proficiency receives particular emphasis. The following statements from Language and Language Learning by Nelson Brooks seem to be representative of language experts supporting the audio-lingual approach:

> What then are the immediate objectives that are legitimate? The first is training in listening comprehension. Although language sounds originate in the voice box of the throat and are modulated into recognizable speech by movements in the mouth, it is the ear that dominates the learning and use of speech sounds. Ear training must come first. The second objective is the reproduction by the tongue and adjacent organs of the speech sounds the ear has learned to recognize.

> It is well to remind ourselves of the great differences, both physiological and psychological, that distinguish each of these skills from the others. One network of organs functions in hearing, a different set in speaking, a third in reading, and still a fourth in writing. All these work in harmony in normal behavior, yet one of them may receive training while others remain undeveloped.
>
> Good language learning is not likely to result from a heterogenous mixture of the four skills from the start, so different are they physiologically and psychologically. There is a natural affinity between hearing and speaking, for both are partners in the audio-lingual band. There is an equally natural affinity between reading and writing, partners in the graphic-material band. In the first pair, <u>emphasis upon hearing should come first</u>, since the ear is the key organ in all speech; it not only permits the individual to hear what is said, but also controls what he says when he acts as a speaker.[1]

In classroom practice to date, ear training generally has not preceded speaking practice. It has been treated as incidental to speaking, rather than as a foundation for it. There has been practically no experimentation to determine the most appropriate amount of time lag between hearing and speaking in various teaching situations.

There also has been a general lack of systematic attention to the development of the listening comprehension skill, not only as a foundation for speaking, but also as an important skill in its own right in making possible effective and satisfying experiences with foreign nationals, movies, TV programs, radio broadcasts, plays, lectures, university courses, etc., both at home and abroad. This is pointed up in the following quotation from "Criteria for the Evaluation of Materials to be Included in a Selective List of Materials for Use by Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages" (March 1961), published by the Modern Language Association (MLA) Foreign Language Program Research Center:

> In the presentation of language for learning, a distinction is made between <u>language for listening</u> and <u>language for imitation</u> in order to accomplish different objectives. Recorded <u>language for listening</u> helps to develop a skill that has been little understood and, hence, very much neglected in foreign language teaching: the ability of a non-native to understand easily when spoken to by a native speaker of the language. Recorded <u>language for imitation</u>, on the other hand, while it may help to develop listening skills, has a quite different main purpose: it serves as a model for the student's own production of the spoken language. Excellent recorded materials are planned and executed with the primary aim of each passage, each drill, clearly in mind. The result is that language for listening and language for imiation are never confused, and one is never used in a place where the other is appropriate.

---

[1] Italics added.

In light of current theories on language teaching, the rationale for an extended period of instruction devoted primarily to listening comprehension can be summarized as follows:

1. Ear training facilitates speaking (Brooks (4), Penfield (24), Gauthier (11)).

2. Concentrating on one skill at a time facilitates learning by reducing the load on the student and by permitting the utilization of materials and techniques geared to the specific objectives and requirements of each skill.

3. When students are required to speak from the outset, the likelihood of failure is increased, apprehension is greater, and confidence develops slowly (if at all). With comprehension alone, correct responses and frequent positive reinforcement is more likely, apprehension is reduced to a minimum and confidence develops rapidly.

4. Hearing his own incorrect pronunciation prematurely may interfere with the student's discrimination and retention of correct sounds.

It also may be noted that listening comprehension lends itself much more readily to automated teaching, mass media, and large-sized classes than does speaking. This fact becomes especially important in view of the critical shortage of qualified language teachers. The development of materials which treat listening comprehension as a primary and separable skill will make possible a variety of programs in which larger numbers of students can be introduced to foreign language instruction, regardless of teacher qualifications; where qualified teachers are available, it will enable them to spend more time with more students in developing speaking and other language skills.

In a revised edition of his UNESCO booklet, William Riley Parker (23), former Executive Secretary of the Modern Language Association, predicts that in the future, foreign language teaching will pay primary attention to listening comprehension as a fundamental, separable learning process, basic to the development of the speaking skill, and, indeed, playing an important part in motivating it.

At present, a listening comprehension period would be severely handicapped by lack of materials to hold the students' interest and to make it an active, rather than a passive, experience. Such materials are required to facilitate needed research and to support current classroom audio-lingual efforts.[1]

---

[1]This would appear especially pertinent in regard to classes conducted by teachers having limited or no competency in the foreign language (as in many FLES programs and TV courses where classroom teachers conduct preparatory and follow-up activities).

E. Problems in the Development and Implementation of Technological Innovations

To date, the full potential of new techniques, materials, and media has not been brought to bear on the problems of language instruction.

1. Motion Pictures

Motion pictures, one of the most powerful communication tools of this century and an excellent instrument for language teaching because of their motivational value and appeal to the auditory, visual and kinesthetic senses, have seen very limited use in foreign language classes. Pioneer efforts such as the Wayne State, Purdue, and Otterbein projects have broken ground on the secondary and college levels. However, much remains to be done. Almost nothing suitable is available for a systematic, comprehensive, and integral use of motion pictures in beginning language instruction at the elementary school level.

In addition to the documentary and cultural type film, as represented by the projects mentioned above, there is a need for creative effort in the development of, and experimentation with, dramatic motion pictures. Such films should have the intrinsic interest and appeal of commercial films and TV dramas, while adhering to a sound pedagogical plan for the progressive acquisition of the desired language skills. The integration of motion pictures with programmed learning materials for use in classroom and TV courses offers excellent possibilities for the improvement of instruction in teacher-conducted and self-instructional programs.

2. Television

TV, in its short history as a medium for language instruction, has generally been used in the manner of the traditional classroom. Programs have been geared mainly to providing instruction where qualified language teachers are not available. As Professor Garry's research (10) points out, student motivation and learning in these situations have been dependent, to a considerable degree, on the classroom teacher's enthusiasm and on her ability to learn along with the students and to conduct preparatory and follow-up activities effectively. For many teachers, the load has been excessive.

Even with enthusiastic teachers, the problem of reinforcing or correcting the pupils' oral responses, as well as the danger of negative learning from imitating a poor classroom model, has been a difficult one. Inconsistency in student responding has been another problem associated with TV instruction.

To reduce the possibility of negative learning and to maintain the interest and cooperation of the classroom teacher at a high level, programs are needed which will enable the teacher to learn along with the pupils, with accompanying relief of much of the usual teaching burden, and with the capability for greater control over student responses. In this regard, the following possibilities offer considerable promise: (a) increased emphasis in beginning TV language courses on the teaching of listening comprehension--and reduced emphasis on speaking; (b) telecasts using a master teacher and/or motion pictures, with classroom preparatory and follow-up activities in the form of programmed learning lessons; and (c) direct telecasting of programmed learning sequences.

The programmed learning materials and motion pictures described in this paper would make possible the above approaches to TV instruction. They also can serve to strengthen classroom courses conducted by qualified teachers--an area in which TV's potential has remained largely untapped to date.

3. The Language Laboratory

There seems to be general agreement that the language laboratory has not relieved the teacher shortage or made it possible for more students to study foreign languages. Where teachers have had to prepare their own materials, the laboratory has increased the teacher's load, rather than decreased it. The potential of the laboratory, however, is considerable. This potential for teaching and for research will be more fully realized as more materials become available that facilitate effective self-instruction. The materials described in this paper are, to a considerable extent, self-instruction and are aimed at increasing the realization of the potential of language laboratories.

4. Programmed Learning[1]

The new technology of programmed learning offers considerable promise for strengthening foreign language instruction. However, to date only a few complete programs are available for school use and most of the current efforts focus on the secondary and college levels.

Programmed learning is an educational technique using material organized into a series of carefully graded small steps, or "items," of instruction, which can be presented to pupils by mechanical means (e.g., tape recorder, programmed textbooks, teaching machines.) Each item generally requires an overt response by the student and is followed with immediate feedback indicating the correctness of the response. Since each item or step prepares the student for the next one, mistakes are infrequent and successful performance is maximized.

[1]Also known as step-increment learning, automated teaching, teaching machine learning, etc.

The feedback or knowledge of results provides the student with continuous positive reinforcement. Each student has the opportunity to progress through the program at his own rate of speed.

Much interesting work is presently underway in language programming. The 1962 Northeast Conference report (8) lists 35 programmed learning projects in progress or recently completed. Of the major audio-lingual projects, the best known in Spanish are probably the University of Michigan project (R. Morton, H. Lane), and the Encyclopedia Britannica Films programs (Introductory Spanish by M. Sullivan; Spanish A by S. Sapon) which are currently available commercially.

The project described here differs from the above mentioned undertakings in four principal ways, namely in: (1) the development of separate, but parallel, programs for listening comprehension and for speaking; (2) the application of programming to group automated instruction; (3) the integration of programmed materials with motion pictures; and (4) the focus on younger pupils, rather than those at the secondary and college levels. These features provide a powerful and flexible tool that makes possible a variety of instructional and research programs not attainable within the scope of programming efforts undertaken to date.

F. Need for a Systems Approach

The problems facing foreign language instruction are great. It would seem desirable and necessary to bring to bear all possible combinations of media to solve these problems. In a report of recent symposia on educational developments (9), experts on communications and new media emphasized that, in the past, we have generally developed and studied media in isolation, instead of in combination. There is a strong need for a total instructional package utilizing various media, materials, and techniques in the manner in which each is best suited to contribute to the learning process. Large-scale research is needed to determine what combinations are most effective with different categories of students under various teaching conditions.

III. Goals of the Proposed Project

The over-all goals of the project as stated earlier, are to improve language instruction and to increase the capabilities of schools for teaching foreign languages effectively, even where a shortage of skilled language instructors exists.

It is proposed that these goals be achieved through the development of an audio-lingual-visual course, utilizing dramatic motion pictures and programmed learning materials as principal instruments of instruction. These materials will be prepared for beginning Spanish in grades 6, 7, or 8 and, as an instructional tool, will be designed to:

A. Instill in students a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language and develop confidence in their ability to do so.

B. Make possible individual, and group, self-instructional programs, thereby enabling more pupils to study foreign languages.

C. Encourage emphasis on listening comprehension as a skill in its own right and as a foundation for speaking.

D. Facilitate implementation of the audio-lingual approach and achievement of audio-lingual teaching objectives in courses conducted by teachers having limited foreign language competence (while simultaneously providing a means for such teachers to improve their own proficiency in the language).

E. Take over part of the teaching function, thereby enabling qualified language teachers to make their skills available to a larger number of students.

F. Make possible new approaches to the use of TV in foreign language teaching.

As a research tool, the materials are intended to provide a flexible vehicle for extensive experimentation on important foreign language learning questions which previously have been difficult to explore because of lack of appropriate materials.

The project also includes plans for a large-scale research study to determine the most effective combinations of instructional materials, qualifications of teachers, and listening-speaking sequence, with respect to student achievement, retention and attitudes toward learning a foreign language.

IV. General Description of Instructional System

The principal elements in the system are the motion pictures, the programmed learning materials and the qualified language teacher (when available).

Each functions in the manner in which it is best suited to contribute to the learning process. For example, the motion pictures present the language in its full behavioral and situational context and help recreate the language learning environment of the foreign country; the programmed materials provide small steps, active participation by all students at all times,

continuous reinforcement to each student, and an opportunity for self-pacing; the teacher is the essential ingredient for live, two-way, human communication. The following is an elaboration on the role that each element is expected to perform and the ways in which they interact.

A. Motion Pictures

The films are expected to create a high degree of interest by presenting colorful characters and intriguing stories in dramatic form. There will be one or more films for every lesson in the course. Beginning with the first film, the aim is for students to achieve maximum comprehension of the foreign language without recourse to English. To accomplish this, a limited number of carefully selected speech patterns are heard in close association with situations, objects and actions, highlighted by special effects of modern motion picture technology. These patterns are constantly repeated throughout the film and recur in each succeeding film.

By presenting language in action--language as it is spoken by native speakers in live situations--the films help recreate the language learning environment of the foreign country. On a regular basis, the students have a sustained, uninterrupted listening experience; they are saturated with the new sounds and gradually begin to feel at home with them. The students listen to many different, authentic native speakers while observing their behavior in a variety of situations. This, together with the fact that meaning is learned through association of sounds with visually presented situations, objects and actions, aids retention and recall and helps to develop the students' ability to bypass English in learning the foreign language.

The high quality of ear training provided by the films and the programmed learning materials facilitates correct pronunciation and accuracy of speech. When the students begin to speak, they employ speech patterns and sounds thoroughly familiar to the ear. Increased variety and interest in oral practice can be achieved by supplementing pattern drills with student reenactment of scenes from the films and conversations based on the stories.

Rapid progress in listening comprehension develops the student's confidence in his ability to learn a foreign language. The desire to understand succeeding films and the satisfaction in being able to do so increase motivation for preparatory and follow-up activities in comprehension and speaking.

Typically, the reward of being able to understand foreign-language films, plays, and broadcasts eludes most language students for many years (forever in some cases); they have not had the necessary continuous and systematic practice, over a long period of time, in listening to sustained conversations in the foreign language. Motion pictures provide this practice along with increasingly greater rewards at each step of the way.

B. Programmed Learning Materials

The programmed learning materials are keyed to, and integrated with, the films. They present essentially the same vocabulary and speech patterns as the films; however, the language elements are not presented in the same verbal and situational context as in the films. Thus the two vehicles provide mutually reinforcing repetition as well as practice in adapting learned material to new situations.

Whereas the motion pictures present the language in its full situational and behavioral context, the programmed material is organized into smaller steps for more intensive work on individual language elements. These elements are taught in the context of meaningful utterances.

The programmed material employs primarily audio-visual items, each consisting of a picture and synchronized foreign language dialogue. In the listening comprehension phase, the student responds on special answer sheets to true-false or multiple-choice items and receives immediate feedback indicating the correctness of the response. The feedback message also repeats the correct statement in the foreign language and may include additional information as preparation for subsequent items. The meaning of the foreign language in each item is made clear to the student from the picture and from clues contained in previous items and feedback messages.

In the speaking phase the student is working with material that is thoroughly familiar to his ear and which he comprehends completely. He can therefore concentrate his attention on pronunciation and accuracy of speech. In carefully graded steps, he proceeds through imitative, manipulative, and creative practice.

Since each item in the listening and speaking exercises essentially prepares the student for the next one, mistakes are infrequent and successful performance maximized. This feature of the material generally is achieved through extensive testing and revising of items during the development of the program.

In both the listening comprehension and speaking phases, the student's score on a particular sequence of items, or on a test at the end of each unit, determines whether he proceeds to the next unit, repeats the present unit, or goes to a remedial unit.

Both group and individual modes of instruction are possible and special teaching machines are not necessary for presentation of the material. Equipment required consists of a picture booklet (flash cards or film strip for group mode), and a tape recorder or record player.

The objective feedback of knowledge of results provided in the listening comprehension program is lacking in the speaking phase. To what extent the student can effectively judge his own performance and to what extent his ability to do so can be improved by special training are questions of concern to audio-lingual programmers. This general problem is discussed further in section VI, D.

C. Role of Teacher

It has been emphasized earlier that one of the critical problems facing language instruction is the shortage of qualified teachers. The proposed materials are expected to alleviate this problem, not only by making possible group and individual self-instruction, but also by enabling qualified language teachers (when available) to reach more students and be more effective in the area of speaking, where human interaction is especially required.

Many different arrangements integrating self-instructional and teacher-conducted activities are possible. The following is an example of one type of plan.

A language class is scheduled for five sessions weekly. Three days a week the students meet without a qualified language instructor. They receive mainly listening comprehension training using the programmed materials and motion pictures, and some practice in speaking using programmed materials; the individual and/or group self-instruction mode is employed. The qualified teacher meets with students two days a week, concentrating primarily on the speaking skill, in the following types of situations:

1. Meets with Students in Small Groups and Individually:

   a. Oral work leading to gradual development of freer and more spontaneous use of the language.
   b. Special pronunciation exercises.
   c. Evaluation of pupil pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency.
   d. Remedial work.

2. Meets with Whole Classes:

   a. Limited number of specific activities (e.g., songs, games, performance of dialogues, plays, etc.)
   b. Other speaking activities typical of teacher-conducted courses (see VI, E).

The total amount of time spent with the teacher, and the division of time among whole class, small group and individual sessions, will depend on a number of factors particular to the individual teaching situation, e.g., total number of classes and students in program, presence or

or absence of language laboratory, extent of emphasis on comprehension and speaking objectives, number of qualified teachers available, etc. With the increased availability of qualified teachers, it will be possible for more students to receive individual attention in the areas listed under 1 on the previous page.

D. Summary of Materials Included in Program

The total package of audio-lingual-visual materials consists of films; programmed materials (student picture booklets, accompanying sound recordings, and response score sheets); teacher's guide; cue pictures; film strips; recording (film sound tracks, dialogues, songs, tests); teacher film script booklet; teacher test booklet.

The materials will provide a flexible tool for integrated classroom, language laboratory, home and TV instruction in both teacher-conducted and self-instructional programs.

V. Research and Development Procedures

A. Personnel

The materials will be developed by a team of specialists in linguistics, language teaching, programmed learning and motion picture writing and production. The research team will include psychologists experienced in educational research who have been working with new media. Consultants in elementary education, linguistics, language teaching, programming, testing, and motion pictures will also be employed. The language specialists on the project will include several native speakers of Spanish.

B. Development of Materials

The first step is to lay out the objectives and content of the overall course of study in considerable detail. When this has been completed and suggestions from the consultants have been incorporated, work begins on the individual units. The following is a tentative outline of the steps to be taken in the preparation of each unit:

1. Specifications of objectives and content of unit.
2. Preparation of preliminary draft of programmed materials and film script.
3. Testing of materials on students individually and in small groups in experimental facility.
4. Revisions of materials and film script.
5. Review of materials and film script by consultants
6. Revisions.
7. Tryout of materials with classes in public schools.

8. Analysis of tryout data.
9. Revisions (part of team is engaged in revision while other team members begin preliminary work on next unit).
10. Second tryout of unit in public schools.
11. Analysis of data from second unit and comparison with results of first tryout.
12. Review of materials and script by consultants.
13. Final draft of materials and production of film.

As several units are completed, they will be available for demonstration and criticism in summer institutes for language teachers.

C. Research

1. Problem

The research being proposed serves two major functions. First, it will provide information on three important educational factors: (1) preparation of the teacher, (2) the instructional material, and (3) the sequence of instruction. Secondly, it is expected that data gathered from the participating teachers and administrators will provide important insights into steps needed to facilitate introduction of new media and methods into the regular school curriculum.

Three conditions of the teacher variable will be studied:

a. Fluent teachers.
b. Non-fluent teachers.
c. Student self-instruction.

Two conditions of the instructional materials variable will be studied:

a. Programmed materials only.
b. Programmed materials and motion pictures.

Two conditions of the teaching method variable will be studied:

a. Extended time lag between listening comprehension and speaking.
b. Listening comprehension immediately followed by speaking.

It is not intended that these three variables be studied separately, but rather that they be studied in combination.

The most important information derived from this kind of research may be the ways in which the three variables interact. Accordingly, an analysis of variance design will be used in the experimental tryout of the instructional materials. Control variables (e.g., student IQ, prior exposure to Spanish, training time, homework, and teacher experience) will be accounted for by randomization procedures.

The purpose of the experiment can be described as an attempt to obtain answers to the following questions:

a. To what extent can programmed materials, or a combination of programmed materials and motion pictures, enable teachers having limited or no foreign language competency to achieve results comparable to qualified language teachers?

b. Does an extended time lag between listening comprehension and speaking facilitate higher achievement in speaking as compared with no time lag between listening and speaking? Are the results the same or different for teacher-conducted and self-instructional programs?

c. To what extent do motion pictures improve the effectiveness of audio and audio-lingual self-instructional and teacher-conducted programs in foreign languages?

d. What are the most effective combinations of instructional materials, qualifications of teacher, and listening-speaking sequence, with respect to student achievement, retention, and attitudes toward learning a foreign language?

e. What practical steps are needed to insure the smoothest possible implementation of new media and methodology into the school curriculum?

2. Method

In this experiment, the various combinations of conditions are such that they cannot be employed simultaneously in the same classroom. Consequently, it is necessary to administer only one treatment per classroom. A random sample of sixth-grade classrooms will be used for the experiment.

Materials for one semester of Spanish instruction will be administered to each classroom according to the treatment conditions assigned to that classroom. Tests of language comprehension and speaking ability will be given to the students immediately following instruction and also after a one-month retention interval. In addition, students' interest in learning a foreign language and confidence in their ability to do so will be investigated, with specially constructed questionnaires, both before and after instruction. Also, specific data will be gathered from teachers and administrators on problems encountered in administering the program.

The speaking test will include tape-recorded performance of students to be judged by expert raters. Coefficients of agreement among raters on an earlier sample of tapes will provide an estimate of reliability

for the speaking test. The reliability of the listening comprehension test will be based on administration of preliminary forms of the test to sixth and seventh graders who have had one or two years of Spanish. Both stability and internal consistency measures of reliability will be computed using standard procedures. Content validity of the speaking and listening tests will be achieved by having the test items represent a large sample of the course. Final selection of items will be made by expert consultants on the basis of the congruence of test items and course objectives.

VI. Detailed Discussion of Course of Study, Materials, and Classroom Techniques and Procedures

A. Objectives

The aim of the basic course is to lay a solid foundation in understanding and speaking as a basis for the progressive acquisition and eventual mastery of these skills, as well as for later development in reading and writing. Thus, we are interested in quality of learning, rather than quantity of coverage--in mastery of the basic patterns of sound and structure, rather than acquisition of an extensive vocabulary. The following are the specific objectives:

1. Motivational

To develop in the student a positive attitude toward learning a foreign language and confidence in his ability to do so. (To so motivate the student that he will continue the study of one language long enough to acquire genuine proficiency and its attendant cultural and vocational rewards.)

2. Understanding

To enable the student to understand the foreign language as spoken by a variety of native speakers, at a normal rate of speed, in situations within the scope of the student's experience and within the scope of the vocabulary covered in the basic course.

3. Speaking

To enable the student to speak the foreign language in everyday situations, within the scope of the vocabulary covered in the basic course, with reasonable confidence, fluency, accuracy, and a pronunciation that is understandable and acceptable to a native speaker.

4. Cultural

To awaken interest in, and develop familiarity with, the people, country, customs, institutions, and way of life that the language represents. This serves as a foundation for a progressively expanding knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the foreign culture and how it compares to our own.

5. Reading and Writing

To enable the student to read easily, and without conscious translation, material that he has already learned to understand and say. To enable the student to write easily and accurately simple sentences that he has already learned to understand, say, and read. (Although reading and writing are not explicit objectives of the basic course, some programs may wish to introduce these skills during the first year. Supplementary materials are provided which can be used for this purpose.)

B. Scope, Organization, and Content

1. Scope

The course includes enough material for approximately one year's audio-lingual work in Spanish for a sixth grade class, meeting 20 to 25 minutes daily. The course can also be used for beginning Spanish at the seventh and eighth grades. In such cases, the amount of time required for completion of the material will depend on the particular teaching situation.

2. Organization

a. The course is divided into 18 units.
b. Each unit represents approximately two weeks of work at the sixth grade level.

3. Content

a. Linguistic

The language elements to be covered in the beginning course are approximately those outlined by Nelson Brooks in Language and Language Learning and include:

(1) All the phonology of the new language.
(2) All or nearly all the syntax patterns used in speaking.
(3) A considerable number of the most frequent classes and forms in the morphology.
(4) A modest amount of vocabulary.

b. Cultural

(1) The linguistic forms themselves will reflect aspects of the foreign culture.
(2) Songs, dances, games, situations, settings, stories, and characters from literature, history, and present-day civilization of Spanish-speaking countries will be included in the materials.

C. Principles

These main principles underlie the course of study and govern the development and use of materials and methods:

1. The proper sequence of language learning is (1) hearing (listening and listening comprehension); (2) speaking; (3) reading; and (4) writing.

2. The use of English as the medium of instruction is held to a strict minimum.

3. New vocabulary is taught in context and not as isolated words.

4. Vocabulary as such is minimized until all common structures have been learned.

5. Grammatical explanations (either in English or the foreign language), as a basis for student memorization of rules, are avoided. The student learns the basic grammatical structures through using them rather than by talking about them.

6. The rate of introducing new material is a function of student progress, proceeding from known material to unknown material and simple to complex in very small steps.

7. Systematic and continuous repetition and review and an opportunity to proceed at one's own pace are necessary to enable even the slowest learner to make satisfactory progress and to develop confidence in his ability to learn a foreign language. A variety of activities and materials and self-pacing opportunities are important factors in maintaining the interest and motivation of the rapid learners.

8. Exercises and activities in which the student receives immediate knowledge of results of the correctness of his responses are a basic feature of the methodology.

D. Materials

The total package of materials consists of films, programmed materials (student picture booklets, accompanying sound recordings, and response score sheets), film strips, cue pictures, recordings (film sound tracks), dialogues, songs, tests, teacher's guide, teacher film script booklet, teacher test booklet.

1. Films

There will be a total of 40 films--2 for each unit, approximately 15 minutes in length, plus 4 review films, 20 to 30 minutes long.

The major film projects to date (Wayne State, Purdue, Otterbein) have been for the secondary and college levels and have emphasized a documentary and cultural approach. The project described in this paper differs in several principal ways. It is designed for the elementary and junior high levels. It presents dramatic plots which should have wide appeal among younger pupils (and probably also among older students studying a foreign language for the first time). It attempts a closer identification of the spoken word with visual imagery and situational context than has been yet achieved. It combines motion pictures with programmed learning materials, providing a flexible vehicle for a wide variety of instructional and research programs.

The following is a summary of the principal features of the films:

a. Each film focuses around a dramatic situation involving several characters. Both animated cartoons and live stories are used to give writers flexibility in getting across linguistic material and developing interesting plots.

b. The vocabulary and structural patterns in each film are carefully controlled as to quantity, sequence, and difficulty.

c. Each film repeats the principal language elements presented in all previous films and introduces new elements.

d. Maximum comprehension of the foreign language without recourse to English is achieved through close identification of the spoken word with objects, actions, and situation; constant audio repetition of a limited number of language elements (within each film and from film to film); and integration with programmed materials.

e. Although all principal elements previously learned recur in every film, visual support is concentrated on new material (i.e., the student is gradually and systematically weaned from visual support of auditory stimuli).

f. Each of the four review films contains a recapitulation of all preceding units (i.e., 1-4, 1-9, 1-13, 1-18) without introducing any new material. These films can be used for review, special oral projects and testing.

g. The language is presented through narrators and natural conversations between characters in the stories.

h. The situation and settings begin with the familiar and obvious and proceed to the less well known, paralleling the linguistic content, which goes from known material to unknown, simple patterns to more complex, and from visual and auditory support to auditory alone.

i. Songs and music are an important and continuous feature of the film series.

j. Situations and settings compare the civilizations of the United States and Spanish-speaking countries as much as possible.

2. Programmed Learning Materials

a. Programming Techniques

(1) Listening comprehension

Items are first presented in the form of pictures with associated statements in Spanish. The student must decide whether the statement is true or false in relation to the picture he sees and marks his answer sheet accordingly. Immediately following his response, the student receives the feedback message which (a) indicates whether the correct answer was true or false, (b) repeats the correct Spanish statement twice, and (c) may contain additional information to help prepare the student for subsequent items. The meaning of each item is made clear through the visuals and/or through hints and clues contained in the item itself or in previous items or feedback messages. The idea is to maximize successful performance.

Items contain progressively more and more Spanish dialogue. The student hears a question and an answer and indicates whether the answer is true or false. The student listens to a short dialogue, story, or simulated radio broadcast; if any part of the content is inaccurate, the item is marked false. Items which do not require the student to respond overtly are used at times to introduce new material or for review. True-false and multiple choice response modes are used.

The student is gradually and systematically weaned from the visuals through use of audio-only sequences in each unit. New language elements are constantly recombined with those previously learned so that there is continuous review. Frequently, a student is exposed to a new language element several times in the feedback message before he is required to respond to it in an item. Initial visuals portray figures which are familiar to the students (e.g., famous personalities, common objects, etc.). In addition to photos, line drawings and cartoons are used for variety. Sound effects (e.g., dog barking, music, etc.) are sometimes used to convey or reinforce meaning or simply for motivational purposes. Humor and surprise are also used to sustain interest at a high level.

Many of the activities described in the section on classroom techniques and procedures (e.g., games, role-playing, etc.) can be included in completely self-instructional programmed units. For example, after a programmed sequence covering particular language elements, the student can be directed to respond to the next 20 items, as though he were individual "x." The same language elements would be covered as in the previous sequence; however, the change in role and the corresponding changes as to right and wrong answers provide variety and keep the repetition from becoming boring.

A test at the end of each unit is used to determine whether a student is ready for the next unit, needs further practice on the present unit, or needs remedial work. Periodic cumulative tests serve the same function.

(2) Speaking

In this phase, the student is working with material which is thoroughly familiar to his ear and which he comprehends completely. He can, therefore, concentrate his attention on pronunciation and accuracy of speech.

Each unit consists of essentially five sections: imitation, creative practice, mimicry-memorization, recombination creative practice, and evaluation.

(a) Imitation practice

The student listens to, and tries to imitate, a native speaking model as precisely as possible. The model pronounces an utterance, the student imitates, and the model repeats. The student makes a subjective

evaluation of how well his pronunciation approximates that of the model and attempts to improve on subsequent trials. Initial utterances are short, gradually and progressively increasing in length and difficulty.

(b) Creative practice

The student listens to a native model present a Spanish utterance; orally performs some specified manipulation (e.g., changes nouns to pronouns, answers a question, etc.); listens to the model pronounce the correct response; and marks his own answer right or wrong on special scoring sheets.

(c) Mimicry-memorization

The student listens to a short dialogue in its entirety. Meaning should be clear from prior listening comprehension practice. Dialogue is then presented one sentence at a time (or in breath groups), with the student imitating each one. After straight mimicry practice, greater emphasis on memorization begins. The student is presented a cue (e.g., the first few words of model utterance) followed by a pause in which the student pronounces the complete utterance and then hears the model again. The cues are gradually withdrawn until student hears an utterance and responds with the next utterance in the dialogue. He continues this process until he knows both roles in the dialogue thoroughly (i.e., can respond to cues without hesitation or mistakes within the time allowed by the pause).

(d) Recombination creative practice

This includes further combining of language elements of the current unit with those of preceding units in the type of creative practice mentioned above. This practice also leads gradually and progressively to freer and more spontaneous use of language.

(e) Evaluation

A test at the end of each unit is used to determine whether the student proceeds to the next unit, repeats the present unit, or goes to a special remedial unit. Where laboratory facilities permit, both the test items and student responses are recorded. The student then listens to the tape for the sole purpose of self-evaluation. Ideally, a teacher would participate in this activity.

(3) Programming problems

Whereas providing objective feedback to students on their responses is not a problem in listening comprehension, it does represent a difficulty in regard to oral responses. To what extent a student can evaluate his own oral responses is an important question concerning audio-lingual programmers. In the creative practice mentioned in "a" above, the student should have relatively little difficulty if the items are properly constructed. The main problem, therefore, is in the area of pronunciation.

Some programmers have assumed that the student must first receive specific training in aural discrimination in order to become an effective evaluator of his own pronunciation. Depending on the programmer, discrimination training generally has meant distinguishing between good and poor pronunciation or English and native pronunciation, or distinguishing between similar sounds within the total phonology of the foreign language and English.

The research of Pimsleur, Mace and Keislar (25) was inconclusive as to the contention that preliminary discrimination training renders subsequent pupil-directed practice in pronunciation more profitable. With programs that spend a considerable number of hours on preliminary discrimination training, much of which is with isolated sounds, there is the problem of maintaining student interest. When applied to a wide population of students, outside of the research setting, motivation might be a serious problem, especially at younger age levels.

The approach we are proposing to investigate is to precede speaking practice with an extended period of listening comprehension. The idea is for the student to hear the language sufficiently, in the natural context of complete and meaningful utterances, so that his ear becomes thoroughly attuned to and at home with the new sounds. It is expected that his ability to discriminate will be one of the cumulative by-products of his preliminary training in listening comprehension and that this will result in more effective pupil-directed practice in speaking.

The research to date in this area has been very limited and far from conclusive. In the final analysis, different methods may work best with students at different age levels and at different stages of language development. Much more research is needed using a variety of programs and approaches and with different age levels and types of students.

b. Programmed Materials

(1) Student programmed work booklet (listening comprehension)

Provides each student with visual stimuli (pictures) and answer sheets for use in automated learning activities. Includes visuals for comprehension tests for each lesson unit. (Teacher may use these to conduct non-programmed activities--e.g., requiring students to apply in new context material learned in programmed lesson.)

(2) Student programmed work booklet (speaking)

Same as (1) above, but for speaking practice.

(3) Recording for programmed exercises (listening comprehension)

Native speakers recording of the auditory stimuli (Spanish dialogue) and feedback which is correlated with the visual stimuli in the student programmed work booklet. Includes comprehension tests for each lesson unit.

(4) Recording for programmed exercises (speaking)

Same as (3) above, but for speaking.

(5) Film strips

Same pictures as in (1) and (2) above for use in group automated learning activities. For class, lab, auditorium, or TV projection.

3. Teacher's Guide

In addition to an over-all discussion of objectives, principles, methods, and materials, the teacher's guide contains a detailed plan for each lesson unit--e.g., specific objectives, linguistic content, methodology, and materials, etc. The following is a brief outline of the guide:

PART I

a. Purpose and organization of the guide.
b. General objectives of course.
c. Scope of course.
d. Principles of language learning.
e. Materials.
f. Methodology.
g. Special considerations for laboratory, TV, and self-instruction.
h. Teacher preparation.

PART II

Lesson Units.

For each unit in the course, the following is included:

a. Linguistic objectives (summary of new patterns and vocabulary to be learned).
b. Listening comprehension exercises and activities.
c. Speaking exercises and activities.
d. Song.
e. Summary of visual and tactile aids to be used.
f. Directions to the teacher.
g. Suggested supplementary listening, speaking, and cultural activities.

4. Cue Pictures

Large colored cue pictures keyed to films; in flip-chart form. Used by teacher with class as a whole for teacher-conducted activities; detachable, so that several can be placed in view of class simultaneously or for use by students in small groups or pairs for special activities.

5. Recorded Sound Tracks

Recording of sound track of each film.

6. Teacher Film Script Booklet

Written text of complete Spanish dialogue and non-literal English translation for each film.

7. Recordings to Accompany Teacher's Guide

Recording of all dialogues and songs which are included in the teacher's guide.

8. Recording of Tests

Native speaker recording of all unit tests.

E. Classroom Techniques and Procedures

The materials permit considerable flexibility in classroom usage. The particular procedures adopted will depend on individual teaching philosophy, the emphasis given to specific objectives, foreign language competency of the teacher, nature of the program being conducted (classroom, laboratory, TV, self-instruction, etc.).

The number of instructional periods required to complete each lesson unit and the number of lesson units that can be completed in a semester or a year will vary according to the conditions of each individual learning situation (e.g., length and frequency of instructional periods; size, ability, and homogeneity of class; outside practice required, etc.).

It is hoped that methodology will be geared to the ideal of having nearly all students develop genuine proficiency with nearly all of the material, as opposed to the practice of merely covering a certain number of lessons in a given period of time.

Many different sequences of presenting exercises and activities may be used. The outline which follows is illustrative of one possible sequence for presentation of each lesson unit, when both self-instructional and teacher-conducted activities are employed.

1. Listening Comprehension

   a. Basic Comprehension Exercises (programmed lessons)

      Students begin programmed lesson, the first half of which introduces new language elements.

   b. Film Presentation

   c. Film Quiz

      Short true-false quiz based on content of film. Teacher supplies answers immediately following quiz for self-scoring by student.

   d. Basic Comprehension Exercises (teacher-conducted)

      Teacher provides further drill on new language elements. Uses cue pictures keyed to the film. May include some of activities described under "f" below. Emphasis is on over-learning of new language elements.

   e. Recombination Comprehension Exercises (programmed)

      Students complete programmed unit, the latter half of which combines new language elements with material from prior units.

f. Recombination Comprehension Exercises (teacher-conducted)

New language elements are combined with old ones in various patterns and contexts. Practice in adapting learned material to new situations is provided.

(1) Role-playing

Individuals or groups are assigned roles from last film or preceding ones (personalities and characters not connected with the films may also be used). All questions, statements and commands are responded to (non-verbal or yes-and-no responses) by the whole class, groups or individuals, on the basis of the assigned roles.

(2) Statements

Student hears Spanish statement; he indicates whether the statement is true or false or identifies picture which statement best describes. Student may hear a series of connected statements (e.g., as in a simulated news broadcast) which contains an error, making the series false.

(3) Questions and answers

Student hears a question and an answer; he indicates whether the answer is true or false.

(4) Dialogues and stories

Student hears a short dialogue or story and must determine whether it is true or false. If any part of content is inaccurate, the whole dialogue or story is considered false.

(5) Games

(a) Who Am I?

Teacher leaves room. A student selects name of a well-known person or a character from one of the films. Teacher asks question to which students reply yes or no. Continues until teacher guesses name or gives up (limit of 20 questions may be imposed).

Teacher describes someone, making one statement at a time. First one who guesses calls out name.

(b) What Is It?

Same as above, but with objects.

(c) Simple Simon Says (or Asks)

Students respond (non-verbal or yes-and-no responses) to commands (or questions) only when teacher prefaces remarks with "Simon says (or asks)." Incorrect response eliminates student from game.

(6) Competition

Class is divided into teams for above activities and others.

(7) Comprehension recapitulation (audio-visual or audio only)

Repeat showing of the film. It may be a regular feature of every lesson unit or it may be used as needed. May include sound track only. True-false quiz based on film may occur here rather than following first film presentation.

(8) Comprehension test

Each lesson unit contains a listening comprehension test with two parts. Part 1 covers new language elements and Part 2 covers language elements of previous lesson units. This will generally be a multiple-choice or true-false test. The teacher uses results as basis for class or individual assignments, at home or in the laboratory, or for additional class activities (e.g., repeat showing of film). On a special chart, each student keeps an ongoing, cumulative record of his progress.

(9) Songs

Whenever possible, songs are chosen which contain language elements keyed to the lesson unit. Students first listen to entire song once or twice, then hum the melody and later memorize and sing the song.

2. Speaking

Speaking activities may be considered to occur in the following forms and sequence: mimicry-memorization, pattern variation, recombination, and self-expression.

In teacher-conducted activities, speaking exercises are varied by having full-class, half-class, small-group, and individual practice with the following types of interactions: teacher-class, teacher-student, student-class, and student-student. Regardless of the particular form in which speaking practice takes place, the teacher must work intensively with a limited portion of the language, maximize the opportunity for all students to speak, and maintain interest at a high level through a fast pace and a variety of activities.

Where laboratory facilities are available, much of the drill type activity of mimicry-memorization and pattern drills will be accomplished with the programmed materials; the teacher will concentrate on recombination and self-expression activities, plus small group and individual evaluation and remedial sessions.

a. Mimicry-Memorization

(1) Dialogue practice

Students learn basic dialogue by heart through imitation of a model.

(a) Presentation

A dialogue, highlighting the new language elements and keyed to the film, is presented to the students by the teacher or by a recorded native speaker. During the first presentation, the students listen. Meaning should be clear from prior listening comprehension practice.

(b) Practice

The following types of activities are continued until memorization or near memorization; class practice may be supplemented by outisde practice for achievement of complete memorization.

- The dialogue is presented again several times, one sentence at a time (or in breath groups) with the students imitating the model as precisely as possible.

- As students become more familiar with the dialogue, they may go from straight imitation of each sentence to responding with the following sentence. If a student falters, the teacher provides correct response promptly.

- When thoroughly familiar with all parts of the dialogue, students may be called on in pairs to perform in front of class. From time to time, they will perform the dialogues in pairs at their seats as the teacher circulates around the class, listening in and offering help.

b. Pattern Variation

The students are asked to manipulate the patterns learned by imitation in various ways: (1) restatement of pattern without any grammatical changes; (2) manipulation of form--2nd person to 1st, singular to plural, nouns to pronouns, present to past, etc.; and (3) manipulation of word order--affirmative-imperative to negative-imperative, answers to questions, etc.

In the beginning exercises, the student is required to manipulate only one element at a time; in later exercises, he may manipulate several elements at a time.

c. Recombination

New language elements are combined with old ones and practiced in various contexts. This provides continuous and systematic repetition and review of old language elements so that they are not lost through disuse.

This recombination deepens and broadens the student's repertoire of responses and is a further step toward self-expression. Almost all the activities described above and in the listening comprehension section provide an appropriate vehicle for recombination practice, e.g., questions and answers, dialogues, songs, role-playing, games, competitions, etc.

d. Self-Expression

True self-expression, the ability to converse easily and naturally on a wide range of subjects, is achieved only after many years of practice. What is called free expression in the basic course is still a rather structured and guided form of speaking practice. However, it provides the student with practice in recalling, using, and adapting to new situations language elements he

has previously learned, while requiring increasingly freer manipulation of these elements. The following are examples of self-expression activities keyed to the subject matter previously covered by students. (If students falter in any of these, teacher provides prompt support, has student repeat correct version and then continue on his own.)

(1) Students are asked simple questions based on memorized dialogue.

(2) Directed dialogue

Students are directed to ask or tell someone something. Other students are directed to respond.

(3) Ask a question

Students are asked to ask any question about a given object or subject; may be asked to use a particular verb, etc. Students are requested to ask as many questions as they can about a given object or subject; other students or teacher responds.

(4) Describe a picture

Students are shown a picture with many visual images within the scope of their Spanish vocabulary and are asked to describe the picture or ask questions about it.

(5) Summarize or retell

Teacher reads a simple story or anecdote, and asks student to retell or summarize in own words.

(6) Structured conversation

(a) Teacher describes a situation, assigns roles, structures roles and has students participate in the conversation.

(b) Teacher reads a simple story or anecdote and has students play roles.

(7) Games (Who Am I? What Is It? 20 Questions)

Students ask questions in order to solve a problem.

e. Use of Motion Pictures in Oral Practice

The motion pictures can be used as a vehicle for almost any of the above types of speaking activities. For example:

(1) Students may be asked to memorize roles in the pictures as a basis for providing the dialogue while film is shown without sound track, dramatizing the film in small groups, making dramatic presentations to groups outside the class, etc.

(2) The film dialogue can be used to vary the context in which pattern practice, dialogue adaptation and directed dialogue are conducted.

(3) The film characters and plots can be used as a basis for class discussions.

(4) Situations similar to those in the films can be used as a basis for structured conversations.

3. Additional Procedures

a. Many of the comprehension and speaking activities can be conducted profitably with students keeping their eyes closed. This helps to eliminate distractions, to increase listening concentration, and to add variety to the classroom activities.

b. Enrichment activities in the form of additional records, tapes, filmstrips, games, motion pictures, anecdotes, stories, etc., which are at the approximate vocabulary level of the class, should be presented to the students to deepen and enrich the learning. Having native visitors speak to the class and visiting native speaking communities are other worthwhile activities.

c. Homework

Home assignments are usually made at the end of each instructional period on a class and/or individual basis; special assignments may be made as a result of the unit test. Programmed lessons are recorded and therefore available for home usage.

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